1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

would come and see me. At night I often listened to them telling folk-tales. Since most of the life was carried on outdoors I could stand on my doorstep and both see and hear the life of the hamlet about me. Here was a noisy quarrel going on, there some children playing, and in the distance, returning from the bush, some men with a wild pig they had just captured. Information was thus obtained through all these methods: regular work with informants in the privacy of my home, observation of all events in the community life, and participation, to some degree, in the casual everyday life of the natives.

I used stick tobacco as my currency in trading with the natives. Everyone—men, women, and children—smoked. They had their own native-grown tobacco, but they much preferred my Virginia twist. All my economic transactions were carried on according to native custom. I had bought with me gifts—knives, spades, loin-cloths, tinsel trimming, jews' harps, etc.—and I was on terms of gift exchange with many of the natives; the code of reciprocity was followed.

My relationship with the natives was not built up in a day. The first month I worked slowly and carefully, developing friendships and winning their confidence. I tried to be perfectly consistent in my behaviour towards them and always gave a very simple reason for everything I did. In a few months I felt secure in their friendship and liking, and I could then venture to get the more intimate details of their life.

To learn the language, which is a hitherto unrecorded Melanesian dialect with apparently Papuan elements, was the most difficult part of the work for me. I recorded texts and then, with the aid of an interpreter, analysed them. I collected a vocabulary as I went along. I listened to native

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu .

the child, but talks merely because he is considered a good orator.

The next ritual feast for the infant will be upon the appearance of his first tooth. For little Ongus, sometimes known as Ongus the second, so as not to confuse him with big Ongus, the chief, whose name he carries, a feast is held to mark this occasion. The host is Muhi, the baby's maternal grandmother's brother, a classificatory grandfather (*yaya*). He contributes the pig, the bananas, the tobacco, and the betel-nut. Taro is contributed by the mother of the child, and Brakko, Molung, and Pulong, all women of the opposite moiety from that of the infant, and of the same clan as his father. The latter, Peiwas, contributes bananas.

The affair is a rather small one, with only about twenty men and boys present. They are gathered in the compound, which was formerly the burial-ground for the hamlet of Panat, which has so shrunk in size that it now uses the cemetery of the next hamlet, Penguli, for burials. But the feasts of Panat are always held on its former burial-ground. Muhi is the host, and it is he who distributes the tobacco and betel-nut, real luxuries to the men. It is Ongas, the infant's father's mother's brother's son, who makes a short speech when they have almost finished eating. "We have come here because Ongus the second has a tooth. It is a very small feast, and there is not much food. Now we have finished." Only the men eat at this feast, the women, as usual, preparing the taro. I was told that if the child cutting its first tooth is female, the women, and not the men, would eat. As no female infant in my neighbourhood happened to cut her first tooth during my visit on the island, I was unable to observe the procedure.

Another ritual feast which may be held before the first tooth is cut, or a year or two after the teething stage, is that given for the possible mates of the child. The one I witnessed

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

in carrying it. A moderately large pig is carried on a pole resting on the shoulders of two men. A very large one requires four men to carry it.

The pig belongs to the man who has hunted it, but if he has had other men's dogs with him they will receive a portion of the animal.[1]

A type of phalanger is found in the bush and is also hunted. Two men go off to the bush together, and, if an animal is sighted in a tree, one man climbs up while the other waits below. The man up the tree will shake the branch on which the animal is, or, if there is a vine, pull it. As the animal falls down the man below catches it. The two men break the legs of the animal and later at home kill it by strangling.

BASKETRY AND WEAVING

Baskets are of the most simple, crude type, and are merely the plaited leaf of the coconut tree. Both men and women make them, each for their own use. They last but a short time, and then new ones are made. The woman has her own basket in which she carries the produce from the garden. The man will hastily make a basket to carry the remains of food home from a feast. A man will also always have a very small envelope-shaped basket in which to carry his betel-nut, his *lest* (powdered lime), tobacco, pipe, etc. There is no decoration on any of the baskets, and they are all of a temporary and crude type.[2]

The only weaving is that of fishing-nets, and this is done by the men only. Not all men can weave the nets, but a few are noted for their skill in it; these few at the present time are old men. The fiber is vine from the bush. One end of the

[1] The pig-hunting is taken from descriptions given to me by men who were hunters. I did not accompany any of them on their hunting expeditions.

[2] But the natives were extremely interested in some rather ornate baskets from Ceylon that I had with me, and examined them with much eagerness.